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Conservation
1972

WAYLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 CONCORD RD.
WAYLAND, MASS. 01778

At the Special Town Meeting within the 1972 Annual Town Meeting, the Conservation Commission will present an Article asking for authority to borrow money in order to buy land of prime conservation importance in the Town of Wayland, as well as to authorize purchase of the first major piece. This flyer will help to acquaint you with some of the facts concerning these Articles as well as the purpose and background of the Plan.

RESIDENT

DATE DUE
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#11275

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Important
Notice Concerning
Town Meeting

TOWN OF WAYLAND
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
38 COCHITUATE ROAD
WAYLAND, MASS. 01778

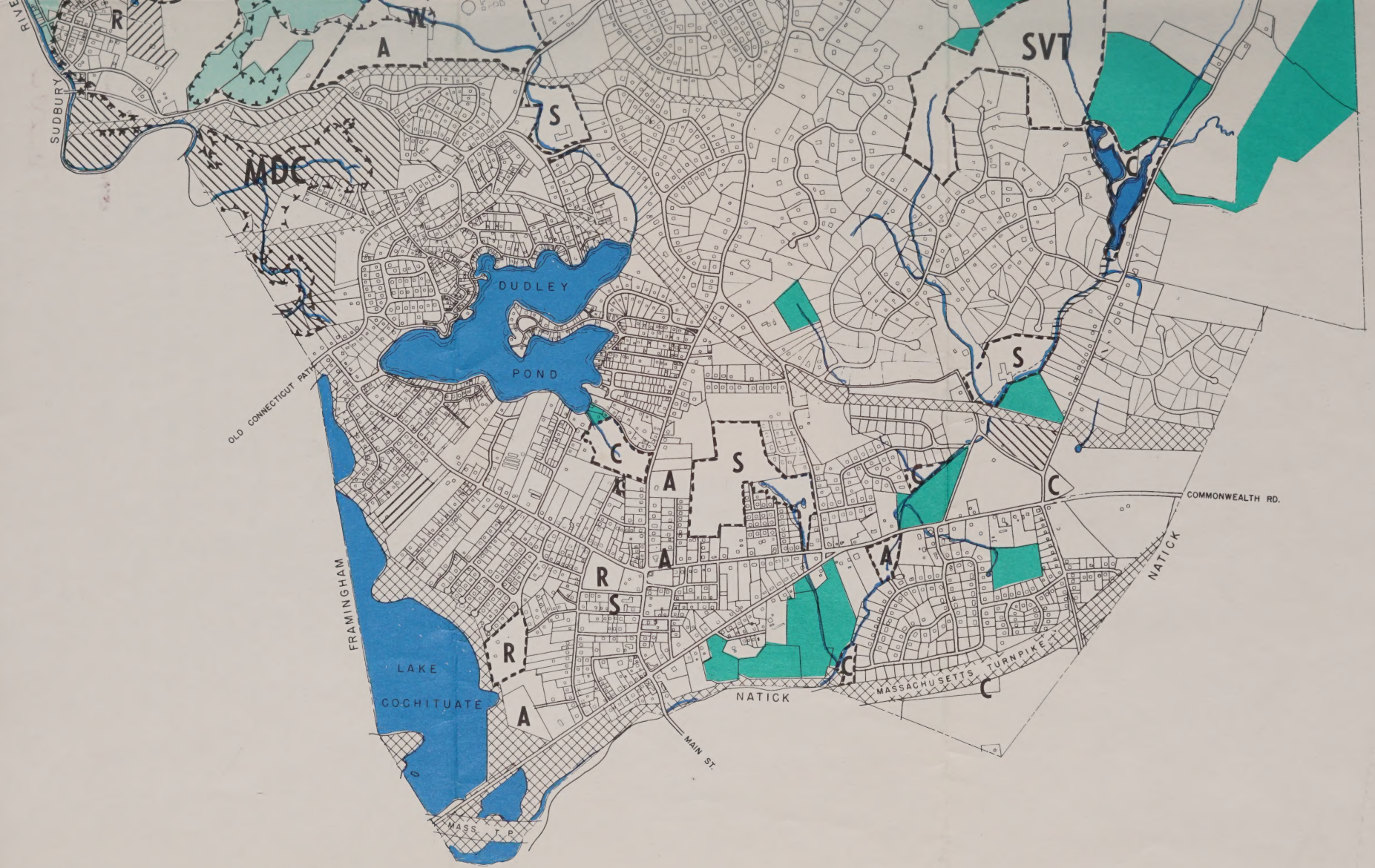
CONSERVATION REPORT

WAYLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MARCH 8 and 13, 1972

Wayland - Recreation
+ Environmental Mat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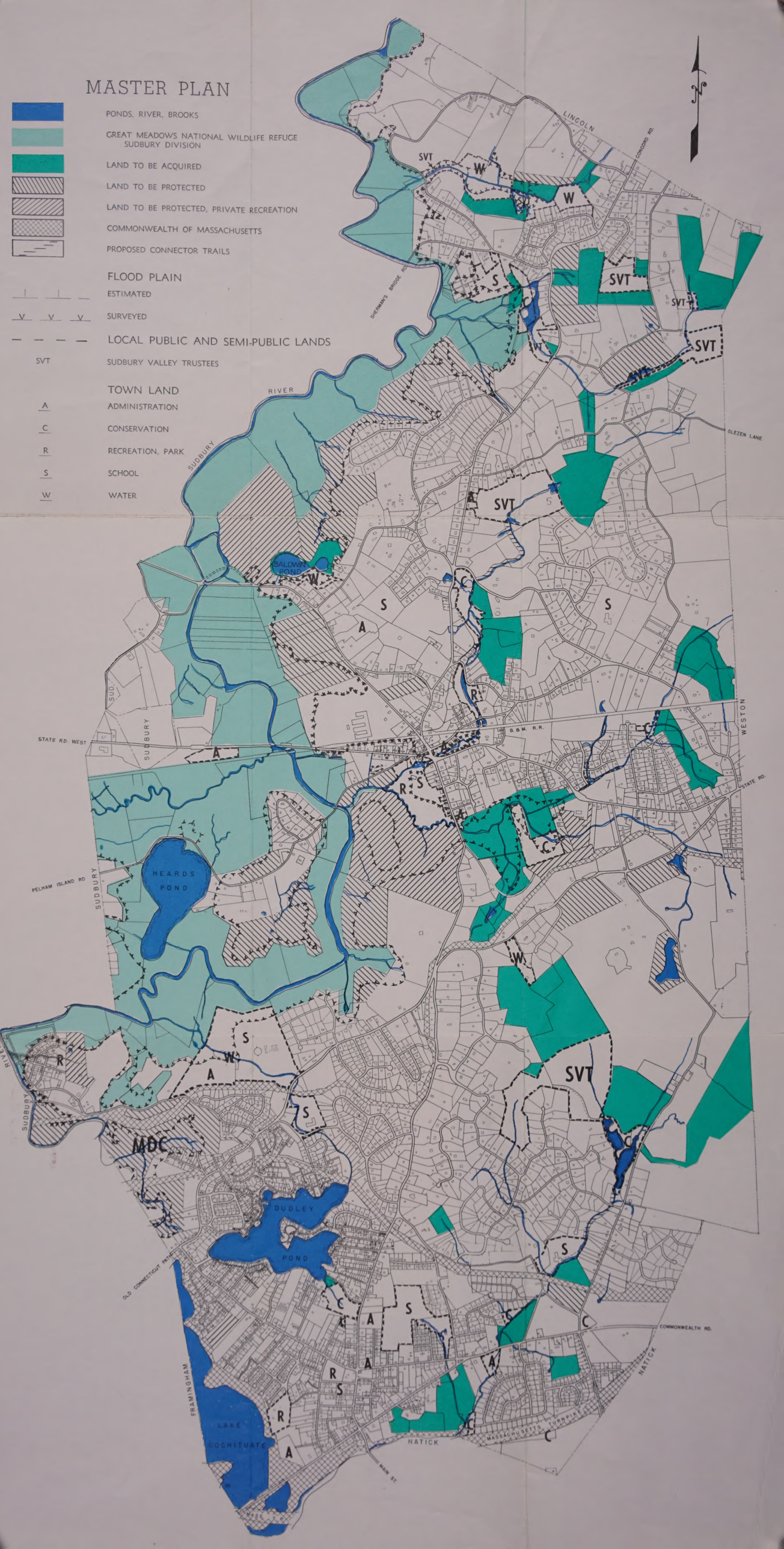
MASTER PLAN
PONDS, RIVER, BROOKS
GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SUDBURY DIVISION
LAND TO BE ACQUIRED
LAND TO BE PROTECTED
LAND TO BE PROTECTED, PRIVATE RECREATION
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
PROPOSED CONNECTOR TRAILS
FLOOD PLAIN
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LOCAL PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC LANDS
SVT SUDBURY VALLEY TRUSTEES
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A ADMINISTRATION
C CONSERVATION
R RECREATION, PARK
S SCHOOL
W WATER
LINCOLN
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B.&M. R.R.
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FRAMINGHAM
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COMMONWEALTH RD.
MAIN ST.

TO THE RESIDENTS OF WAYLAND:

This message is sent to you in anticipation of the **Town Meeting on March 13, 1972,** at which the voters will be asked to approve a major step in implementing Wayland's Conservation Master Plan. We hope the information provided here will prepare you for adequate consideration of this very important matter.

What is the Conservation Master Plan?

The Plan is a statement of goals and a guide for action, designed to assist the Conservation Commission in carrying out its mandate from the General Court: to conserve and protect Wayland's natural resources. The Plan was developed by the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and dozens of other townspeople, who spent several years identifying and evaluating our resources, considering possible ways of protecting them, and suggesting the best ways to proceed. Throughout development of the Plan, and in up-dating it to the present, we have worked closely with other groups who are concerned with related local or regional needs: housing, recreation, water supply, waste disposal, education, transportation, and walkways. The Plan was published in 1967 as a pamphlet entitled "A Conservation Plan for a Better Wayland", and there are copies in the Wayland Libraries.

What are Wayland's natural resources?

Basically, these are our land, our water, and our air. The benefits we derive from them are important:

An excellent water supply;

Space for recreation and relaxation;

Air that is tempered and cleansed by our fields and forests;

Surroundings that are pleasant to the eye and not too offensive to the ear;

Plants and animals to enrich our lives.

How are our natural resources threatened?

Destruction or deterioration of our land and water and air is a gradual process, easily overlooked until too late. The unrelenting pressures of urban growth produce a new building here; a pavement there; a filled wetland somewhere else; until suddenly we wake up and realize that our fields and forests are gone; our waters are polluted or are being drained away wastefully to the sea; our air is fouled; and our surroundings are crowded and squalid. Of course we do not advocate complete exclusion of development, but it is obvious that the needs of housing and transportation must not be allowed to overwhelm our other needs. We can not simply shrug this off and say that the natural resources of the hinterland can be diverted to the uses of the city. Metropolitan areas have long been getting their water supply that way, but our state and national leaders have been emphasizing that we have nearly reached our limit in that respect, and that growing communities will soon have to look within their own boundaries for their source of water. Wayland's Water Department estimates that our present wells can support a population of 18,000. Our present population is 13,000, and our 1990 population has been estimated as 25,000. Similar considerations apply to other needs which are currently well satisfied by Wayland's natural resources. Obviously, the time has come to think of the future.

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How can we protect our natural resources?

Briefly, we must ensure proper land-use, and minimize pollution of our air and water. The Conservation Master Plan proposes that these goals should be accomplished in two ways: by means of appropriate laws, and by means of a land-purchasing program. Wayland uses zoning laws, public-health laws, and subdivision regulations to accomplish several conservation objectives: protection of ground-water recharge areas; restriction of actions which promote rapid and wasteful drainage of ground water; minimizing floods and keeping buildings out of areas vulnerable to floods; minimizing water pollution and erosion.

But protective laws may decrease property values if not used with great restraint. For example it is generally agreed that protection of brooks requires a conservation strip at least 500 feet wide along the brooks, but Wayland's brook-protection zones are less than one-tenth that wide. Moreover, experience shows that laws protecting privately-owned wetlands are frequently violated, and that the violations usually are irreversible, so such laws merely retard, rather than prevent, the destruction of wetlands. Finally, there are some open-space values which can not be protected by action of law alone: outdoor recreation is the outstanding example.

For all the above reasons, and others, we are now proposing to embark on a vigorous land-acquisition program. This is the major step which we are asking you to approve at Town Meeting.

What land is to be acquired?

The map on the back of this sheet, reprinted from our 1967 pamphlet, shows the land we hope to purchase or otherwise protect in solid dark green or diagonal black striping. The map does not show the few changes which have been made since 1966 (a new printer's plate would have been too costly), but the complete and accurate map may be inspected in the Hearing Room in the Town Building, and will be displayed at Town Meeting. The total area is about 1250 acres.

The criteria used in selecting these tracts will be readily apparent from what was written above: There is land along brooks (though unfortunately much of that had already been preempted by development). There are swamps and marshes and meadows. There is land of outstanding scenic value, and land of outstanding value for nature preserves, or town forest, or outdoor recreation. There are tracts intended to provide connecting links for a trail system. And last, but not least, there is land associated with our present and future ground-water wells.

Land shown as "to be protected" is land for which we hoped to accomplish the desired conservation objective without outright purchase by the Town; for example, by purchase of a conservation restriction, or by a purchase-and-lease-back arrangement. However, in estimating costs we have used the appraised market value of these tracts.

Will land-owners be forced to sell?

No. We will not use eminent domain. We will be buying land (or restrictions) only from willing sellers at a mutually agreeable price. Moreover, every purchase must be submitted to Town Meeting for specific approval.

What will our program cost?

A professional appraiser has estimated the present market value of the 1250 acres at about $3,500,000. The actual cost to the Town will be lower because of State and Federal reimbursement programs. Thus, Wayland's conservation-land purchases have so far been offset by 50% reimbursement in every case. The Conservation Capital Planning Committee, whose report is included herewith, has estimated that if all the land were purchased now under a $3.5 million bond issue, the cost would be equivalent to $4.25 on our tax rate for twenty years. This March we are asking for a $500,000 bond authorization, to cover one immediate purchase and other future purchases. We believe that borrowing is the fairest way to pay for major land acquisitions, because future residents will share the benefits, and should also share the costs.

The costs estimated above include loss of present taxes on the land. It must not be assumed that if the land we hope to acquire were developed instead, the Town would drive increased income. On the contrary, the report of the Capital Planning Committee shows that development might produce **net costs** to the Town equivalent to an **increase** of $7.75 in the tax rate.

Why are we asking for more bonding authorization than we need at once?

We have found it very difficult to negotiate with land-owners without some kind of evidence that we would be able to produce the necessary funds if an agreement were reached. It is true that every purchase will still have to be ratified at a Town Meeting, but a liberal bond authorization will constitute substantial evidence that we are acting in good faith. No bonds will be issued until the money is actually needed, so there will be no advanced burden of principle or interest to be carried by the Town.

What is the one immediate purchase for which approval is sought?

This is the 85-acre Pelham Island Tract, for which we are proposing to pay $171,400. If we receive 50% reimbursement, this purchase will add about 25 cents to the tax rate for twenty years. The present owner is the Sudbury Valley Trustees, a non-profit organization devoted to the conservation of open space in the Sudbury River valley, which has agreed to sell it to the Town at this price — its original cost. Current appraisals indicate a fair market value of about $200,000.

Why should the Town buy the Pelham Island Tract if the Sudbury Valley Trustees already own it?

The Tract is heavily mortgaged, and the SVT doubt that they will be able to meet payments due after this year — they have simply been unable to raise this large sum in private gifts. If the land were to come on the market as a result of a mortgage foreclosure, we would want to buy it, and the price might be considerably higher. It is fortunate that the SVT have been able to hold the land as long as they have, and it is in the Town's best interest to secure the future of the Tract. We hope that the SVT will continue to serve as brokers for conservation land, taking advantage of their ability to act quickly in cases where speed is essential.

* * * * * *

If you have questions which were not answered above, there will be a meeting on this subject, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, on March 2 at 8 p.m. in Room L-1 in the High School. There will be public walks on the Pelham Island Tract on March 4 at 10 a.m. and March 5 at 2 p.m. Meet at the south end of Heard Road.

The Wayland Conservation Commission

Mrs. K. C. Black	Kenneth A. Moon
Gordon W. Fellows	Allen H. Morgan
Charles H. Hart, III	G. Prentiss Richardson
Edward C. Mendler, Jr.	Mrs. Nathan Newbury, III, Assoc.

FEBRUARY 29, 1972